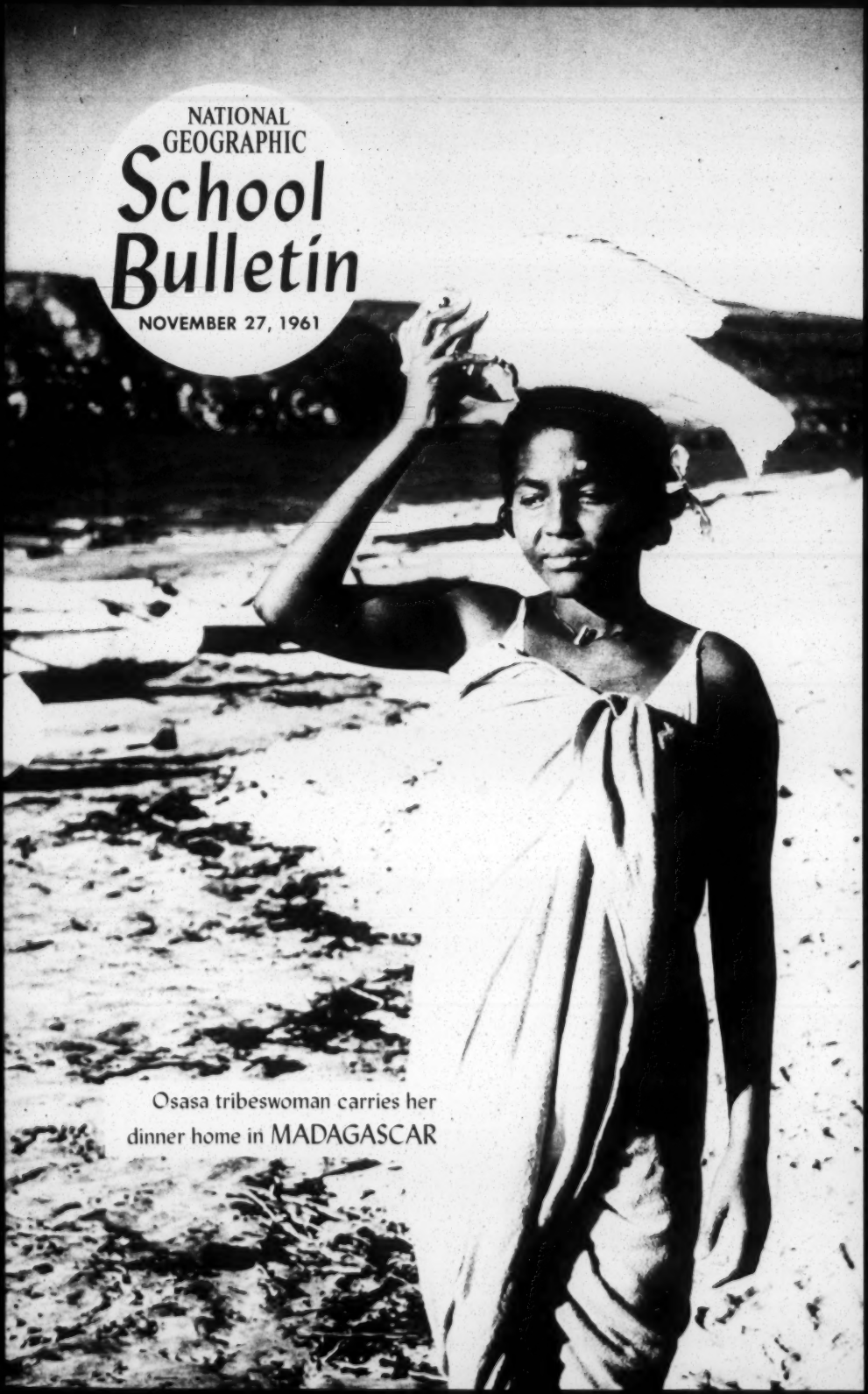

NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

School Bulletin

NOVEMBER 27, 1961

Osasa tribeswoman carries her dinner home in MADAGASCAR

UMI

HARVESTERS use their heads to bring in sheaves of rice, Malagasy's chief food

Malagasy . . . Africa's Asian Island

AT FIRST glance a visitor to the Malagasy Republic (Madagascar), an island nation off Africa's southeast coast, might think he had boarded the wrong plane and landed in Asia.

He begins to have doubts even before he lands. He looks down on mile after mile of rice paddies—a scene more typical of Japan or China than of nearby Africa.

"There's the capital, Tananarive . . . Queen Ranavalona's palace on the hill . . . We're about to land at Arivonimamo Airport," the stewardess announces. The complicated and musical Malagasy words recall the language of Malaya instead of an African tongue.

In Tananarive, or Tana, as the Malagasy call their capital and largest city, the traveler sees rickshas pulled along the winding cobblestone streets.

The men who pull them have dark olive complexions and

All Photographs by Quentin Keynes

DANCER of the Sakalava tribe performs for his king on the island of Nosy Bé, off Malagasy's west coast.

© National Geographic Society 1961

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straight hair. They look more like Indonesians than Africans.

The roots of most Malagasy families lie far to the east.

Adventurous seafarers from Polynesia, Malaya, and other Oriental places traveled in large canoes to this long and narrow Indian Ocean island. No one knows just when—even tribal legends do not go back that far.

After those early settlers, Arabs, Indians, Chinese, French, and Africans came to live on the island. They added their racial strains to the population and some of their words to the language.

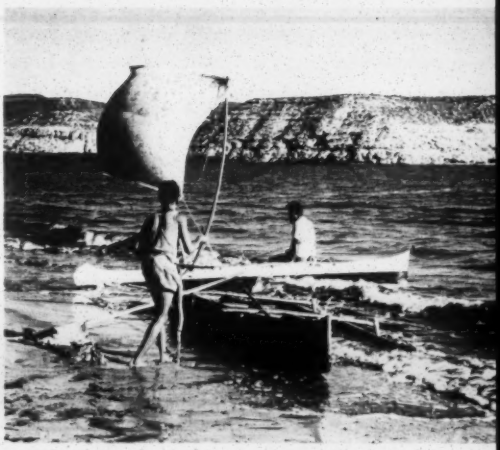
Covering about 228,000 square miles, Malagasy is almost as big as Texas. It is the fourth largest island in the world (after Greenland, New Guinea, and Borneo). It lies 250 miles from Africa, across the Mozambique Channel.

The first European to find the island was the Portuguese explorer Diego Dias, in 1500. He thought he was sailing along the east coast of Africa until the land ended abruptly.

For almost 400 years Dutch, French, and English tried to raise their flags over the island, but the Malagasy successfully kept them out. Then in 1896 the French finally deposed the last queen of the island, Ranavalona III, and ruled for half a century. The island was known as Madagascar.

Last year the islanders won independence and changed their nation's name to the Malagasy Republic. The island itself is still Madagascar.

The island measures only about



FISHERMEN beach outrigger canoes on the Bay of St. Augustin. Few Malagasy fish for a living. The Vezo ("children of the sea") who live near here are one of few tribes that do. They catch sharks and red snappers.

MALAGASY Republic stretches 980 miles beside Africa's southeast coast. It is nearly the size of Texas, but holds 5,300,000 people, a little more than half the population of Texas.

FLOWERS for sale in the Zoma ("Friday") market in Tananarive. Many villages are named for the days they hold their markets.

350 miles across—a comfortable day's drive on United States highways. In Malagasy, the trip would take much longer. From a fringe of coastal lowland, the island rises to a plateau. The plateau in turn soars to mountain peaks that cut the island down the middle. Road building is difficult, and for many years parts of the country were practically unknown. Today, planes link cities on every part of the island.

The Malagasy live in tribes. Christian missionaries have won many converts, but ancient customs die hard.

One group believes its ancestors were crocodiles. They say they recognize grandparents and great-grandparents among the beasts that live in the sacred lake Anivorno. Occasionally a crocodile appears to his "grandson" in a dream and scolds him for not feeding the reptiles as often as he should. Villagers organize a sacrifice, and present their "ancestors" an ox.

Among the Betsileo herdsmen, a girl wouldn't dream of marrying a boy, no matter how handsome, unless he had stolen an ox—part of a boy's growing up among these people.

Malagasy build their homes of the ravenala, a palm-like tree often used as a symbol of the island because it is so common. They turn its timber into frames for the houses, the leaves and stalk into thatch for walls and roof, and the bark into floors.

They can even drink from this tree. Also called the traveler's tree, it stores water in its stalks. A knife cut lets loose a drinkable stream.

Most Malagasy farm for a living. They trade their harvest to Chinese merchants for oil lamps, metal basins, and clothing.

Rice paddies stretch over the lowlands, and coffee bushes dot the mountain slopes. Most of the coffee goes to France.

Here in the United States, however, we use products every day that are grown on Malagasy farms. The pepper you sprinkled on your egg this morning could have come from this far-off land.

What flavor was your last ice cream cone? If vanilla, perhaps the flavoring came from Mala-

UMI

WOMEN sort coffee, Malagasy's chief export, on the island of Nosy Bé.

gasy. Flavor for ice cream and candy is a big business there.

It is also a painstaking business. Vanilla comes from the bean of a tropical orchid that thrives on the island. Each blossom of the plant must be pollinated by hand. After harvesting, the beans are cured for six months before the flavor is ready. They dry in the sun all day, but must be wrapped in blankets and taken indoors at night.

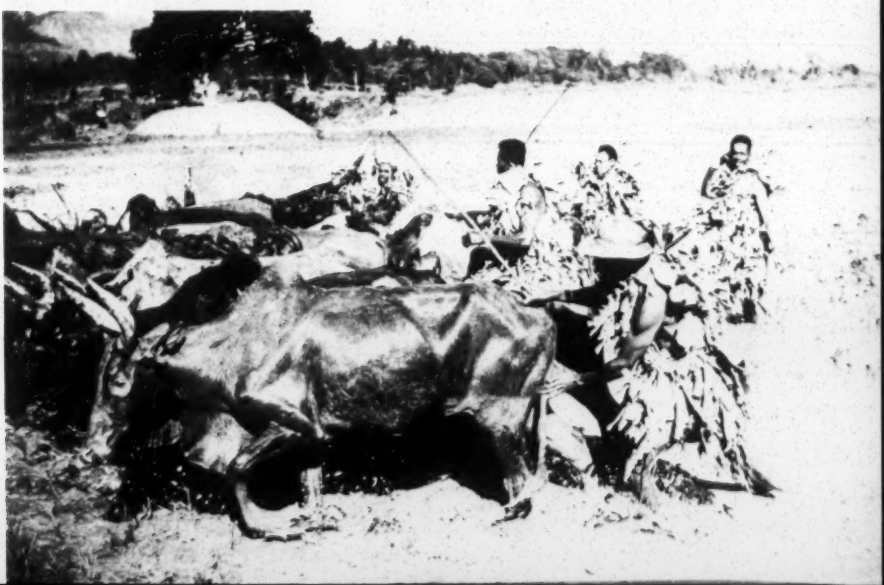
Like cattle, they are branded to prevent theft. The grower pricks each bean with pins in his own pattern.

Perhaps your mother sometimes bakes a ham for dinner. Does she spice it with cloves? The cloves could also have come from Malagasy.

With little industry or mineral wealth Malagasy depends on its farmers and herdsmen.

The island has more cattle—some 6,000,000—than it has people. Meat is one of the most plentiful foods. A visitor reports his dinner in a hotel began with calves' liver, was followed by chopped meat, ox tongue, and roast beef. L.B.

PLOWING without a plow. Men dress in dry banana leaves to scare the cattle. The frightened animals charge about the rice field, churn up mud as effectively as a plow.



This is the house that Mark built.
These are the bricks of various hue
And shape and position straight and askew,
With the nooks and angles and gables too,
Which make up the house presented to view,
The curious house that Mark built.

Mark Twain's House

PROBABLY America's most beloved author, Mark Twain built his "curious house" in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1874, and lived in it 17 years.

Here he wrote *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, Huckleberry Finn, A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, Life on the Mississippi,* and other books. He also wrote about his home, his sports, and his family. The words in *italic* on these pages were written by Mark Twain. They show both his funny and serious sides.

The house itself is now a memorial to Twain, open to the public. Here you can see his writing desk, the rooms he had modeled after those of a Mississippi River steamboat, and his household machinery.

Twain, like the rest of us, had trouble concentrating on his work. He had a study and writing room built, but it was too comfortable, and the view from the windows too attractive. "I couldn't do anything at all except gaze at it," he said. So he moved to a desk that faces only a bare wall. F.S.

UMI

GET A BICYCLE. *You will not regret it, if you live.... I have seen it stated that no expert is quick enough to run over a dog; that a dog is always able to skip out of his way. I think that the reason he couldn't run over the dog was because he was trying to. I did not try to run over any dog. But I ran over every dog that came along. Even when I could not hit a wagon, I could hit a dog that came to see me practice... And they all came, for there was very little going on in our neighborhood to entertain a dog.*

GO TO BED *early, get up early, this is wise. Some authorities say get up with the sun; some others say get up with one thing, some with another. But a lark is really the best thing to get up with. It gives you a splendid reputation with everybody to know that you get up with the lark; and if you get the right kind of lark, and work at him right, you can easily train him to get up at half past nine, every time—it is no trick at all.*

All Photographs by Frank Sartwell
National Geographic Staff

TO US, *our house... had a heart and a soul and eyes to see us with; and approvals, and solicitudes, and deep sympathies, it was of us, and we were in its confidence, and lived in its grace and... peace. We never came home from an absence that its face did not light up and speak out ... welcome.*

UMI

Alaska's Big Tasty Crabs

A GIANT from the largest state is the Alaska king crab, a tasty meal showing up more and more often on the American dinner table.

This monster among crabs usually tips the scales at seven to 10 pounds, although one weighed 22.3 pounds.

From claw to claw, he measures about five feet—probably a little longer than you are tall.

He lives in the cold waters of the Bering Sea and northern Pacific Ocean. He will live on any sort of bottom, except an extremely rocky one, but prefers mud, or sand and mud, 180 to 420 feet below the surface.

CANNERY worker in Homer, Alaska, exhibits two big king crabs. One leg makes a meal. Sometimes, a single crab fills a dozen 6½-ounce cans.

Photographs by W. Robert Moore, National Geographic Staff

However, he doesn't stand still for long. He has six walking legs, and puts them to good use. The Department of the Interior tagged some that legged it along the ocean floor for as many as 300 miles. Walks of 50 to 100 miles are common.

The king crab hikes to shallower waters—30 to 150 feet deep—for the mating season, then back to the depths and the search for food.

His favorite meals are clams and sea urchins, but he wouldn't turn down a piece of salmon, should it be offered.

Like other crabs, the king crab is a crustacean, covered by a hard shell. As the crab's body grows inside the shell, it becomes crowded. So every year the crab sheds its old shell, and grows a new, bigger one. This process is called moulting.

For decades the Japanese have been harvesting this rich sea crop. Every spring the crabbing fleet leaves its home base of Hakodate on the northern island of Hokkaido.

The trip to the Bering Sea fishing grounds lasts several months, and the send-off is festive.

Ships are decked with paper streamers, and relatives and friends turn out to wish the crew *bon voyage,* somewhat the way the Greeks send off the sponge fishermen from Kalimnos Island. (See *Geographic School Bulletin,* November 13, 1961.)

In recent years American fish-

ermen have begun to take advantage of this wealth beneath the sea.

Some catch them in "pots," or traps, baited with fish and lowered to the ocean bottom. Others drag huge nets along the ocean floor.

WORD OF THE WEEK

Crustacean (krŭs-tā'shŭn) n. *The scientific name for a group of animals enclosed in crusty shells. There are about 10,000 species of crustaceans. The most common are crabs, shrimps, lobsters, and crayfish. Most crustaceans live in salt water and breathe through gills.*

Some ships stay at sea for days or weeks. If the catch stayed with them, the crab on the dining room table would not be very fresh.

So a floating factory goes along. The crabs are moved from salt water tanks on the fishing boat to the factory ship where they are washed, graded, cooked, then either frozen or canned.

Speed is important to preserve the crabs' freshness. The whole move from tank to freezing takes less than an hour.

Only the large male crabs are used. The female king crab holds less meat, and it is of lower quality. Females are thrown back in the sea.

Every year the catch grows larger. This year fishermen netted more crabs in the first eight months than they caught in all of last year. They look forward to a year-end total of 60,000,000 pounds.

The government now wants to be sure we don't eat up all the king crabs at one gulp, that we save some for tomorrow. Studies are being made of the animals' habits with an eye to making new conservation laws.

The king crab is gaining in popularity not only at the table but also in the laboratory. Two live crabs were recently put in plastic bags and flown to Harvard Medical School. There researchers are studying how the crab speeds up its own heartbeat —a strange ability of the crab that may be of use in studying heart disease in humans. L.B.

A LOAD of king crabs arrives at the Homer cannery. Each crab yields 25 to 30 percent pure meat, most from the legs. Dried, ground shells go into fertilizers and poultry food.

The Old Explorer

ONCE I said that, to be an explorer, you do not have to be first.

A few weekends ago, I practiced what I preach. Four of us canoed through the wooded canyons of the Youghiogheny River (Yock-a-gainy) from Turkey Foot to Ohiopyle, Pennsylvania.

We were not the first to do this. One who beat us to it was George Washington. But as we launched our canoes that crisp autumn morning, with swirling mists rising from the clean swift stream, we felt as elated as the original discoverers of this first route across the Allegheny Mountains.

England's colonies in America were confined to the Eastern seaboard by the Alleghenies. Settlement had crawled up the Potomac River to Wills Creek in western Maryland. Beyond were savage Indians in the vast Ohio lands controlled by a few French forts. If the colonies were to expand, they must find a route through the mountains.

Spread the fingers of both hands. Now slide the fingers of one hand into the spaces between the fingers of the other hand, not quite letting them touch. This is the way the headwater streams of the Potomac and Ohio Rivers intertwine. The Indians had long known, and George Washington and his countrymen soon learned, that the fingers representing Wills Creek and the Youghiogheny created an almost continuous path of water through the mountains.

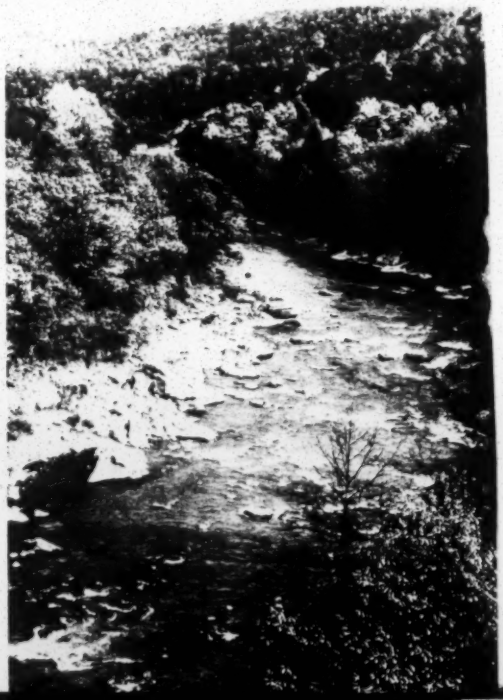
But what a path! We found that more than one-fourth of the distance we canoed was "white water." The rush of the stream was so great that its surface boiled up into a froth of white rapids. Gray boulders strewed our path, sweeping swiftly behind us like forgotten ghosts as we called up all our skill to avoid crashing the ones ahead.

Turkey Foot, where we put in, was named by pioneers who saw the likeness of a turkey footprint where two streams join the river like this: ⋲

Now called Confluence, this spot was well-known to Nemacolin, a friendly Delaware Indian, and to Christopher Gist, the first English-speaking settler in the Ohio watershed. When Washington, as a young man and loyal British subject, led a small army into French territory in 1754, he canoed from Turkey Foot to test whether he could use the Youghiogheny for shipping supplies toward Fort Duquesne (now Pittsburgh).

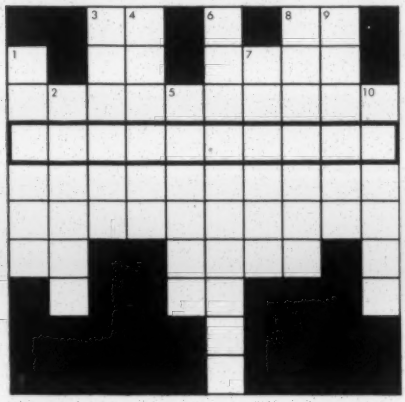
The falls at present-day Ohiopyle convinced him this wouldn't work.

Our trip of personal discovery also ended just above Ohiopyle Falls. Like



GEO-GRAPH

Solve the outlined word to learn the capital of the Malagasy Republic. All words are used in the Malagasy story, pages 98-101.



DOWN

1. _____ outnumber people in Malagasy
2. Malagasy language resembles that spoken in _____
3. Malagasy was formerly a _____ colony
4. Malagasy is an _____
5. It lies in the _____ Ocean
6. Malagasy Republic's other name
7. Malagasy is 240 miles off the coast of _____
8. Malagasy product used in flavoring
9. Spice grown in Malagasy
10. Another spice grown in Malagasy

Last week's puzzle

E	L	I	Z	A	B	E	T	H	
				H	E	N	R	Y	
		R	A	V	E	N	S		
			R	U	F	F			
		B	O	L	E	Y	N		
			T	H	A	M	E	S	
	T	R	A	I	T	O	R	S	
				K	E	Y	S		
				C	R	O	W	N	

a miniature Niagara, the greenish torrent dropped 20 feet over a brown ledge near the center of town. Autumn colors framed the little-known scenic gem.

After the United States became free, Washington dreamed of firmly uniting east and west by digging a canal past these falls to connect the Potomac and Ohio systems. This never came to pass, but railroads now hug the river on each shore, following the trail blazed through the wilderness by Nemacolin, Gist, and Washington.

Deep in the folds of the Alleghenies, spanking the wild water with our canoes, we could have been just a bend of the river behind them.

Israelis To Build Cities In Negev

In the next ten years, five cities will rise in the Negev, the sandy southern half of Israel.

The Israeli Government expects these made-to-order desert settlements to house a million persons from the flood of immigrants still pouring into the small young nation.

A wasteland peopled by wandering Bedouin in recent centuries, the Negev is rapidly being turned into valuable property. Cities, towns, and villages spot the once-blank area south of the Dead Sea. Orchards, fields of cotton, wheat, and vegetables grow where camel herds of the tribesmen searched for sparse grass.

Beersheba was only a dusty caravan stop in 1948. Israelis turned it into a bustling industrial town. Its population has grown from 1,400 to some 45,000 people.

Eilat, on an arm of the Red Sea, was a small army garrison. Today it is the home of much of Israel's merchant fleet. Its population of 6,000 is expected to reach 20,000 by 1963.

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Swiss Honor Their Onions With Celebration Today

The Swiss honor the onion with its own special day. On the fourth Monday in November, the people of Bern, the Swiss capital, turn out for the Onion Market.

Onions—white, red, yellow, in baskets and on strings—are everywhere. There is onion bread, onion salad, onion cakes, and sausage with onions.

Onions are sold in front of the Federal Palace, a little like selling them in front of the United States Capitol. The onion market was there first, so the Swiss see no reason to move it.

Bernese trace the Onion Market back more than 500 years. In 1405 a fire destroyed much of the city. People from the neighboring town of Fribourg came to help.

To say thank you, the Bernese set aside one day each year when their neighbors could hold a market in the Bern public square. At the time, onions were in demand because people thought they would ward off sickness, especially the plague.

Swiss National Tourist Office

Parading onions help celebrate the annual Onion Market in Bern, Switzerland.

Australia's Tangy Slang

"Ut's hard yacker, mate. I'm crook, and everything's up the spout."

In this manner, a salty Australian bloke, a man who speaks some of the most vigorous slang on earth, might suggest that things are not going well.

Australians pepper their speech with words that mean little to the uninformed: Yacker (work), crook (out of sorts), tucker (feed), sheila (girl), furphy (rumor), fair cow (anything that does not meet with one's approval), and 'ow-yergoin'mate orright? (hello).

The great Australian adjective is bloody, a word that is avoided by polite company in England. On the continent down under, however, the word has become so commonplace that no one would hesitate to use it anywhere except in church. In Aussie slang, it is just about the handiest little six-letter word available, and it would not be stretching things to give the time as, "One o'bloody clock, mate."

Going camping, an Australian would doubtless eat damper—bread baked in ashes. Things would certainly be fair cow if he couldn't find a billabong, or water hole. He'd boil water for tea in a tin can called a billy—as mentioned in the song *Waltzing Matilda*.

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...also Pennsylvania, Israel

Editor—Ralph Gray

Assistants—Arthur P. Miller Jr., Frank Sartwell, Liva Baker, Lea Ridgley

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NEXT WEEK—
Antarctica Anniversary Issue

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